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I know that great Spirit of sunlike lustre beyond the darkness. A man who knows him truly passes over death; there is no other path to go.

Grasping without hands, hasting without feet, he sees without eyes, he hears without ears. He knows what can be known, but no one knows him; they call him the first, the Great Person.—*Svetasvatara-Upanishad.*

THE PATH.

VOL. II. MAY, 1887. No. 2.

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REINCARNATION.

A WESTERN STUDY OF THE SUBJECT.

Although commonly rejected throughout Europe and America, reincarnation is unreservedly accepted by the majority of mankind at the present day, as in all the past centuries. From the dawn of history it has prevailed among the largest part of humanity with an unshaken intensity of conviction. Over all the mightiest Eastern nations it has held permanent sway. The ancient civilization of Egypt, whose grandeur cannot be overestimated, was built upon this as a fundamental truth, and taught it as a precious secret to Pythagoras, Aristotle, Plato, Plotinus and Ovid, who scattered it through their nations. It is the keynote of Plato's philosophy, being stated or implied very frequently in his dialogues. "Soul is older

than body," he says. "Souls are continually born over again from Hades into this life." In his view all knowledge is reminiscence. To search and learn is simply to revive the images of what the soul saw in its pre-existent state in the world of realities. The swarming millions of India also have made this thought the foundation of their enormous achievements in government, architecture, philosophy and poetry. It was a cardinal element in the religion of the Persian Magi. Alexander the Great gazed in amazement on the self-immolation by fire to which it inspired the Gymnosophists. Cæsar found its tenets propagated among the Gauls. The circle of metempsychosis was an essential principle of the Druid faith and as such was impressed upon our forefathers the Celts, the Gauls and the Britons. It is claimed that the people held this doctrine so vitally that they wept around the new born infant and smiled upon death—for the beginning and end of an earthly life were to them the imprisonment and release of a soul, which must undergo repeated probations to remove its earthly impurities for final ascent into a succession of higher spheres. The Bardic triads of the Welsh are replete with this thought, and a Welsh antiquary insists that an ancient emigration from Wales to India conveyed it to the Brahmins. In the old civilizations of Peru and Mexico it prevailed universally. In the mysteries of Greece, Rome and Britain the ceremonial rites enacted this great truth with peculiar impressiveness for initiates. The Jews generally adopted it from the Babylonian captivity. John the Baptist was a second Elias. Jesus was commonly thought to be a reappearance of John the Baptist or of one of the old prophets. The Talmud, the Kabbala and the writings of Philo are full of the same teaching. Some of the late Rabbins assert many entertaining things concerning the repeated births of the most noted persons of their nation. This idea played an important part in the thought of Origen and several other leaders among the early Church Fathers. It was a main portion of the creed of the Gnostics and Manichaeans. In the middle ages the sects of the Cathari, the Bogomiles and many scholastics advocated it. It has cropped out spontaneously in many Western theologians. The elder English Divines do not hesitate to inculcate pre-existence in their sermons. The Roman Catholic Purgatory seems to be a makeshift improvised to take its place.

Men of profoundly metaphysical genius like Scotus, Kant, Leibnitz, Lessing, Schopenhauer, Schlegel and the younger Fichte have upheld reincarnation. Scientists like Flammarion have earnestly believed it. Theological leaders like Julius Müller, Dorner, H. Ernesti Ruckert and Edward Beecher have maintained it. In exalted intuitional natures like Boehme and Swedenborg its hold is apparent. Most of the mystics bathe in it. Of course the long line of Platonists from Socrates down to Emerson have no doubt of it. Even amid the predominance of materialistic influences in

Christendom it has a considerable following. Traces of it are found among the aborigines of North and South America and in many barbaric tribes. At this time it reigns without any sign of decrepitude over the Burman, Chinese, Japanese, Tartar, Thibetan, and East Indian nations, including at least 750,000,000 of mankind and nearly two-thirds of the race. Throughout the East it is the great central thought. It is no mere superstition of the ignorant masses. It is the chief principle of Hindu metaphysics,—the basis of all their inspired books. Such a hoary philosophy, upheld by the venerable authority of ages, ruling from the beginning of time the bulk of the world's thought, is certainly worthy of the profoundest respect and study.

But the Western fondness for democracy does not hold in the domain of thought. The fact that the majority of the race has agreed upon reincarnation is no argument for it to an Occidental thinker. The conceit of modern progress has no more respect for ancient ideas than for the forgotten civilizations of old, even though in many essentials they anticipated or outstripped all that we boast of. Therefore we propose to treat this subject mainly from a Western standpoint, showing,

I. Some reasons which may assure us of the truth of reincarnation.

II. The most interesting poetical expressions of this idea in our own tongue.

I.—WESTERN EVIDENCES OF REINCARNATION.

The old Saxon chronicler, Bede, records that at a banquet given by King Edwin of Northumbria to his nobles, a discussion arose as to how they should receive the Christian missionary Paulinus who had just arrived from the continent. Some urged the sufficiency of their own Druid and Norse religions and advised the death of the invading heretic. Others were in favor of hearing his message. At length the King asked the opinion of his oldest counsellor. The sage arose and said "O King and Lords. You all did remark the swallow which entered this festal hall to escape the chilling winds without, fluttering near the fire for a few moments and then vanishing through the opposite window. Such is the life of man, whence it came and whither it goes none can tell. Therefore if this new religion brings light upon so great a mystery, it must be diviner than ours and should be welcomed." The old man's advice was adopted.

We are in the position of those old ancestors of ours. The religion of the churches, called Christianity, is to many earnest souls a dry husk. The germinant kernal of truth as it came from the founder of Christianity, when it is discovered under all its barren wrappings is indeed sufficient to feed us with the bread of life. It answers all the practical needs of most people even with the husks. But it leaves some vital questions unanswered which impel us to desire something more than Jesus taught—not for mere curiosity

but as food for larger growth. The divine law which promises to fill every vacuum, and to gratify at last every aspiration has not left us without means of grasping a portion of these grander truths, by independent methods.

The commonest idea of the soul throughout Christendom seems to be that it is created specially for birth on this world and after its lifetime here it goes to a permanent spiritual realm of infinite continuance. This is a very comfortable belief derived from the appearances of things, and those holding it may very properly say "My view agrees with the phenomena and if you think differently the burden of proof rests upon you." We accept the this responsibility. But a careful observer knows that the true explanation of facts as a rule is very different from the appearance. Ptolemy thought he could account for all the heavenly motions on his geocentric theory and his teachings were at once received by his cotemporaries. But the painful studies of Copernicus and Galileo had to wait a century before they were accepted, although they introduced an astronomy of immeasurably nobler scale. Is it not a relic of the old confidence in appearances to consider the orbits of human souls as limited to our little view of them?

There are six arguments for Reincarnation which seem conclusive.

1. That the idea of *immortality* demands it.
2. That *analogy* makes it the most probable.
3. That *science* confirms it.
4. That the *nature of the soul* requires it.
5. That it *explains* many *mysterious experiences.*
6. That it alone *solves* the problem of *injustice* and *misery* which broods over our world.

1. Immortality demands it.

Only the positivists and some allied schools of thought, comprising a very small proportion of Christendom doubt the immortality of the soul. But a conscious existence after death has no better proof than a pre-natal existence. It is an old declaration that what begins in time must end in time. We have no right to say that the soul is eternal on one side of its earthly period without being so on the other. Far more rational is the view of certain scientists who, believing that the soul originates with this life, also declare that it ends with this life. That is the logical outcome of their premise. If the soul sprang into existence specially for this life, why should it continue afterward? It is precisely as probable from all the grounds of reason that death is the conclusion of the soul as that birth is the beginning of it. On the contrary all the indications of immortality point as unfailingly to an eternity preceding this existence: the love of prolonged life, the analogy of nature, the prevailing belief of the most spiritual minds, the permanence of the ego principle, the inconceivability of annihilation or of creation from nothing, the promise of an extension of the present career, the injustice of any other thought.

All the probabilities upon which the assurance of the soul's immortality rests, confirm the idea that it has an eternal existence in the past as well as in the future. What the origin of the soul may have been does not affect this subject, further than that it antedates the present life. Whether it be a spark from God himself, or a divine emanation, or a cluster of independent energies, its eternal destiny compels the inference that it is uncreated and indestructible. Moreover, it is unthinkable that from an infinite history it enters this world for its first physical experience and then shoots off to an endless spiritual existence. The deduction is rather that it assumed many forms before it appeared as we now see it and is bound to pass through many coming lives before it will be rounded into the full orb of perfection and reach its ultimate goal.

2. The argument from analogy is especially strong.

The universal spectacle of incarnated life indicates that this is the eternal scheme everywhere, the variety of souls finding in the variety of circumstances an everlasting series of adventures in appropriate forms. For many centuries in the literature of nations a standard simile of the soul surviving its earthly decay has been drawn from the transformation of the caterpillar into the butterfly. This world is the grub state. The body is the chrysalis of the soul. But the caterpillar came from a former life, in the egg. The violent energy of the present condition argues a previous stage leading up to it. It is contended with great force of analogy that death is but another and higher birth. This life is a groping embryo plane implying a more exalted one. Mysterious intimations reach us from a diviner sphere,

> "Like hints and echoes of the world
> To spirits folded in the womb."

But the same indications argue that birth is the death of an earlier existence. Even the embryo life necessitates a preparatory one preceding it. So complete a structure must have a foundation. So swift a momentum must have travelled far. As Emerson observes "We wake and find ourselves on a stair. There are other stairs below us which we seem to have ascended; there are stairs above us, many a one, which go upward and out of sight."

The grand order of creation is everywhere proclaiming, as the universal word, "change". Nothing is destroyed but all is passing from one existence to another. Not an atom but is shifting in lively procession from its present condition to a different form, running a ceaseless cycle through mineral, vegetable and animal existence, though never losing its individuality, however diverse its apparent alterations. Not a creature but is constantly progressing to something else. The tadpole becomes a fish, the fish a frog, and some of the frogs have turned to birds.

> "There is a spirit in all things that live
> Which hints at patient change from kind to kind
> And yet no words its mystic sense can give
> Strange as a dream of radiance to the blind."

Evolution has remoulded the thought of Christendom, expanding our conception of physiology, astronomy and history. The more it is studied the more universal is found its application. It seems to be the secret of God's working. Now that we know the evolution of the body, it is time that we learned the evolution of the soul. The biologist shows that each of us physically before birth runs through all the phases of animal life—polyp, fish, reptile, dog, ape and man—as a brief synopsis of how the ages have prepared our tenements. The preponderance of special animal traits in us is due, he says to the emphasis of those particular stages of our physical growth. So in infancy does the soul move through an unconscious series of existences, recapitulating its long line of descent, until it is fastened in maturity. And why is it not true that our soul traits are the relics of former activities?

3. Furthermore, the idea that the soul is specially created for introduction into this world is antagonistic to all the principles of science. All nature proceeds on the strictest economical methods. Nothing is either lost or added. There is no creation or destruction. Whatever appears to spring suddenly into existence is derived from sufficient cause—although as unseen as the vapor currents which feed the clouds.

Physiologists contend that the wondrous human organism could not have grown up out of mere matter but implies a pre-existent spiritual idea which grouped around itself the organic conditions of physical existence and constrained the material elements to follow its plan. This dynamic agent—or the soul—must have existed independent of the body before the receptacle was prepared. The German scientists Müller and Stahle, have especially illustrated in physiology this idea of a pre-existent soul monad.

The common resurrection idea makes immortality an arbitrary stroke of God at the end of the earthly drama. But science allows no such exceptional miracle. It recognizes rather the universality of resurrection throughout all nature. We have no experience whatever of the resurrection taught by theologians; but we constantly see new appearances of souls in fresh bodies. These cannot have darted into their first existence as we behold them. From the hidden regions of some previous existence they must have come.

4. A much more weighty and penetrative argument is that the nature of the soul requires reincarnation. The conscious soul cannot feel itself to have had any beginning any more than it can conceive of annihilation. The sense of persistence overwhelms all the interruptions of forgetfulness and sleep, and all the obstacles of matter. This incessant self-assurance suggests the idea of the soul being independent of the changing body, its temporary prison. Then follows the conception that as the soul has once appeared in human form so it may reappear in many others. The eternity

of the soul past and present leads directly to an everlasting succession of births and deaths, disembodiments and reëmbodiments.

The identity of the soul surely does not consist in a remembrance of all its past. We are always forgetting ourselves and waking again to recognition. But the sense of individuality bridges all the gaps. In the same way it seems as if our present existence were a somnambulent condition into which we have drowsed from our earlier life, oblivious of most of that former activity, and from which we may after a while be roused into wakefulness.

The study of infancy shows that the mental furniture with which we begin this life presupposes a former experience. The moral character of children, especially the existence of evil in them long before it could have been implanted by the present existence has forced many acute observers to assume that the human spirit had made choice of evil in a pre-natal sphere.

The unsatisfied physical inclinations of a soul are indestructible and require a series of physical existences to work themselves out. And the irrepressible eagerness for *all the range of experience* necessitates a course of reincarnations which shall accomplish that result.

5. Reincarnation explains many curious experiences. Most of us have known the touches of feeling and thought that seem to be reminders of forgotten things. Sometimes as dim dreams of old scenes, sometimes as vivid lightning flashes in the darkness recalling distant occurrences, sometimes with unutterable depth of meaning. It appears as if Nature's opiate which ushered us into this arena had been so diluted that it did not quite efface the old memories, and reason struggles to decipher the vestiges of a former state. Almost everyone has felt the sense of great age. Thinking of some unwonted subject often an impression seizes us that somewhere, long ago, we have had these reflections before. Learning a fact, meeting a face for the first time, we are puzzled with an obscure assurance that it is familiar. Travelling newly in strange places we are sometimes haunted with a consciousness of having been there before. Music is specially apt to guide us into mystic depths where we are startled with the flashing reminiscences of unspeakable verities which we have felt or seen ages since. Efforts of thought reveal the half-obliterated inscriptions on the tablets of memory, passing before the vision in a weird procession. Everyone has some such experiences. Most of them are blurred and obscure. But some are so remarkably distinct that those who undergo them are convinced that their sensations are actual recollections of events and places in former lives. It is even possible for certain persons to trace quite fully and clearly a part of their by-gone history prior to this life.

Sir Walter Scott was so impressed by these experiences that they led him to a belief in pre-existence. He writes (in "Guy Mannering"),

"How often do we find ourselves in society which we have never before met, and yet feel impressed with a mysterious and ill defined consciousness, that neither the scene nor the speakers nor the subject are entirely new; nay feel as if we could anticipate that part of the conversation which has not yet taken place." Bulwer Lytton describes it as "that strange kind of inner and spiritual memory which often recalls to us places and persons we have never seen before and which Platonists would resolve to be the unquenched and struggling consciousness of a former life." Explicit occurrences of this class are found in the narratives of Hawthorne, Coleridge, DeQuincy and many other writers. A striking instance appears in a little memoir of the late Wm. Hone, the Parodist, upon whom the experience made such a profound effect that it roused him from thirty years of materialistic atheism to a conviction of the soul's independence of matter. Being called in business to a house in a part of London entirely new to him, he kept noticing that he had never been that way before. "I was shown" he says, "into a room to wait. On looking around, to my astonishment everything appeared perfectly familiar to me: I seemed to *recognize* every object. I said to myself, what is this? I was never here before and yet I have seen all this, and if so there is a very peculiar knot in the shutter." He opened the shutter and there was the knot.

A writer of reputation mentions the following instance: A friend's child of four years was observed by her elder sister to be talking to herself about matters of which she could not be supposed to know anything. "Why, Winnie," exclaimed the elder sister, Louisa, "What do you know about that? All that happened before you were born!" "I would have you know, Louisa, that I grew old in heaven before I was born!" Similar anecdotes might be produced in great number.

Objectors ascribe these enigmas to a jumble of associations producing a blurred vision like the drunkard's experience of seeing double, a discordant remembrance, snatches of forgotten dreams—or to the double structure of the brain. In one of the lobes, they say, the thought flashes a moment in advance of the other and the second half of the thinking machine regards the first impression as a memory of something long distant. But this explanation is unsatisfactory as it fails to account for the wonderful vividness of some of these impressions in well balanced minds, or the long trains of thought which come independent of any companions, or the prophetic glimpses which anticipate actual occurrences Far more credible is it that each soul is a palimpsest inscribed again and again with one story upon another and whenever the all-wise Author is ready to write a grander page on us He washes off the old ink and pens his latest word. But some of us can trace here and there letters of the former manuscript not yet effaced.

6. The strongest support of this theory is its happy solution of the

problem of moral inequality and injustice and evil which otherwise overwhelms us as we survey the world. The seeming chaos is marvellously set in order by the idea of soul-wandering. Many a sublime intellect has been so oppressed with the topsy-turviness of things here as to cry out "There is no God. All is blind chance." An exclusive view of the miseries of mankind, the prosperity of wickedness, the struggles of the deserving, the oppression of the masses, or on the other hand, the talents and successes and happiness of the fortunate few, compels one to call the world a sham without any moral law to regulate it. But that consideration yields to a majestic satisfaction when one is assured that the present life is only one of a grand series in which every individual is gradually going the round of infinite experience for a glorious outcome,—that the hedging ills of to-day are a consequence of what we did yesterday and a step toward the great things of to-morrow. Thus the tangled snarls of earthly phenomena are straitened out as a vast and beautiful scheme, and the total experience of humanity forms a magnificent tapestry of perfect-poetic justice.

The crucial test of any hypothesis is whether it meets all the facts better than any other theory. No other view so admirably accounts for the diversity or conditions on earth, and refutes the charge of a favoritism on the part of Providence. Hierocles said, and many a philosopher before and since has agreed with him, "Without the doctrine of metempsychosis it is not possible to justify the ways of God." Some of the theologians have found the idea of pre-existence necessary to a reasonable explanation of the world, although it is considered foreign to the Bible. Over thirty years ago Dr. Edward Beecher published "The Conflict of Ages," in which the main argument is this thought. He demonstrates that the facts of sin and depravity compel the acceptance of this doctrine to exonerate God from the charge of maliciousness. His book caused a lively controversy and was soon followed by "The Concord of the Ages" in which he answers the objections and strengthens his position. The same truth is taught by Dr. Julius Müller, a German theologian of prodigious influence among the clergy. Another prominent leader of theological thought, Dr. Dorner, sustains it.

But, it is asked, why do we not remember something definitely of our previous lives, if we have really been through them?

It has been shown that there are traces of recollection. The reason of no universal conviction from this ground is that the change into the present career was so violent and so radical as to scatter all the details and leave only the net spiritual result. As Plotinus said "Body is the true river of Lethe; for souls plunged into it forget all." The real soul life is so distinct from the material plane that we have difficulty in recalling many experiences of this life—especially when an abrupt departure from old associations severs the connecting links. Who retains all of his childhood's life? And

has anyone a memory of that most wonderful epoch—infancy? Our present forgetfulness is no disproof of the actuality of past lives. Every night we lose all knowledge of what has gone before, but daily we awaken to a recollection of the whole series of days and nights. So in one life we may forget or dream and in another recover the whole thread of experience from the beginning—or the substance of it. In the cases of decrepit old age we often see the spirits of strong men divested of all memory of their life's experience and returning to a second infancy—in a foretaste of their entrance upon the next existence.

We conclude, therefore, that Reincarnation is necessitated by immortality, that analogy teaches it, that science upholds it, that the nature of the soul needs it, that many strange sensations support it, and that it alone grandly solves the problem of life. The fullness of its meaning is majestic beyond appreciation, for it shows that every soul from the lowest animal to the highest archangel belongs to the infinite family of God and is eternal in its conscious essence, perishing only in its temporary disguises; that every act of every creature is followed by infallible reactions which constitute a perfect law of retribution; and that these souls are intricately interlaced with mutual relationships. The bewildering maze thus becomes a divine harmony. No individual stands alone, but trails with him the unfinished sequels of an ancestral career, and is so bound up with his race that each is responsible for all and all for each. No one can be wholly saved until all are redeemed. Every suffering we endure apparently for faults not our own assumes a holy light and a sublime dignity. This thought removes the littleness of petty selfish affairs and confirms in us the vastest hopes for mankind.

In this connection the following extracts from distinguished writers are specially interesting :—

Schopenhauer, the German Philosopher, writes (in "The World as Will and Idea"): "The fresh existence is paid for by the old age and death of a worn out existence which has perished, but which contained the indestructible seeds out of which this new existence has arisen. They are one being."

The doctrine of metempsychosis springs from the earliest and noblest ages of the human race and has always been spread abroad in the earth as the belief of the great majority of mankind—as the teaching of all religions excepting that of the Jews and the two which have proceeded from it. The belief in this truth presents itself as the natural conviction of man wherever he reflects at all in an unprejudiced manner; where it is not found it must have been displaced by positive religious doctrine from another source. It is obvious to everyone who hears of it for the first time. See how earnestly Lessing defends it (in the last seven paragraphs of his 'Erziehung des Mennschengeschlechts').

Lichtenberg also says: 'I cannot get rid of the thought that I died before I was born!' Even the skeptical Hume says in his radical essay on immortality: 'The metempsychosis is therefore the only system of this kind that philosophy can hearken to.'

What resists this belief is Judaism and its two descendants (Christianity and Mohammedanism) because they teach the creation of man out of nothing. Yet how difficult it has been to link the conception of future immortality to this is shown by the fact that most of the old heretics believed in reincarnation—Simonites, Manicheans, Basilidians, Valentinians, Marcionists and Gnostics. Tertullian and Justinian inform us that "even the Jews themselves have in part fallen into it."

From a letter written by that curious genius William Blake (the artist) to his friend John Flaxman (the sculptor); (see Scoones' English Letters, p. 361):

"In my brain are studies and chambers filled with books and pictures of old which I wrote and painted in ages of eternity before my mortal life; and these works are the delight and study of archangels.

"You, O dear Flaxman, are a sublime archangel, my friend and companion from eternity. I look back into the regions of reminiscence and behold our ancient days before this earth appeared and its vegetative mortality to my mortal vegetated eyes. I see our houses of eternity which can never be separated, though our mortal vehicles should stand at the remotest corners of heaven from each other."

The novelist Bulwer thus expresses his opinion of this truth: "Eternity may be but an endless series of those migrations which men call deaths, abandonments of home after home, even to fairer scenes and loftier heights. Age after age the spirit may shift its tent, fated not to rest in the dull Elysian of the heathen, but carrying with it evermore its two elements, activity and desire."

One of Emerson's earliest essays ("THE METHOD OF NATURE") contains this paragraph: "We cannot describe the natural history of the soul, but we know that it is divine. I cannot tell if these wonderful qualities which house to-day in this mortal frame, shall ever re-assemble in equal activity in a similar frame, or whether they have before had a natural history like that of this body you see before you; but this one thing I know, that these qualities did not now begin to exist, can not be sick with my sickness nor buried in my grave; but that they circulate through the Universe: before the world was, they were. Nothing can bar them out, or shut them in, but they penetrate the ocean and land, space and time, form and essence, and hold the key to universal nature."

Edgar A. Poe writes (in "EUREKA"): "We walk about, amid the destinies of our world existence, accompanied by dim, but ever present memories of a Destiny more vast—very distant in the by-gone time and infinitely awful.

"We live out a youth peculiarly haunted by such dreams, yet never mistaking them for dreams. As *memories* we know them. During our youth the distinctness is too clear to deceive us even for a moment. But the doubt of manhood dispels these feelings as illusions."

The second portion of our study will be—Reincarnation in the Light of our own Poets.

E. D. WALKER.

THE DOCTRINE OF INNATE IDEAS.

[A PROBLEM OF WESTERN METAPHYSICS SOLVED IN THE LIGHT OF THE ESOTERIC DOCTRINE.]

The controversy as to whether our ideas of causation, substance, time and space are innate and referable to the original constitution of the mind or complex notions acquired from our experience of sensations, is one that cannot fail to be of interest to the student of occultism. The Intuitionalist school headed by Kant regard these ideas as existing in the mind independently of experience, as a necessary condition of our subjectivity; the Sensationalists—who include in their number some of the most eminent psychologists of the day—as due to our sensations and traceable to the operation of the Laws of Association. Mr. Herbert Spencer occupies a middle position between these contending parties. According to him they are the expression of the racial experience in the mental heredity of the individual. Take as an illustration our idea of space. According to the Intuitionalists it is innate—a condition of our perception of objects; in contradistinction to this view it is held by others that "space in the abstract is merely the community or similarity of extended bodies and of the intervals between them commonly called empty space"[1] our conception of space is contingent on our perception of objects; these latter again on our sensations, and the fact of our inability to perceive objects which do not occupy some position in relation to one another, produces so powerful an association between these two ideas, that we are unable to think of any object without the accompanying notion of its location *somewhere*. Hence the idea of space. The Spencerian Evolutionist, however, while admitting the justice of the Sensationalist contention with regard to the primary development of the idea, recognises in the phenomenon as present in the mind of the infant, an ancestral legacy bequeathed in the vehicle of heredity, an heirloom representing the experience of the countless organisms that con-

1 Dr. Alex Bain, Logic, Part I, p. 11.

stituted the evolutionary ascent up to civilized man. As, however, it is impossible to conceive of the heredity of a *form of thought* and in addition this explanation is purely materialistic, I shall not have occasion to regard it in the course of these brief remarks.

It is clear then that we can look for no decisive answer to Western psychology. To quote the forcible remarks of Buckle on European metaphysics:[1] "Whoever will take pains to estimate the present condition of mental philosophy must admit, that, notwithstanding the influence it has always exercised over some of the most powerful minds, and through them over society at large, there is, nevertheless, no other study which has been so zealously prosecuted, so long continued and yet remains *so barren of results.* * * * * * Men of eminent abilities, and of the greatest integrity of purpose have in every civilized country, for many centuries, been engaged in metaphysical inquiries; and yet at the present moment their systems, so far from approximating towards truth, are diverging from each other with a velocity which seems to be accelerated by the progress of knowledge." The too confident advocacy of them by their respective supporters as the truth, and nothing but the truth, he adds, has, "thrown the study of the mind into a confusion *only to be compared to that in which the study of religion has been thrown by the controversies of the theologians.*" It would be difficult to frame a more severe indictment than this drawn up by so impartial and justly renowned a critic. It merely shows, that the physical intellect alone is absolutely inadequate to embrace the vast domain of Psychology or to formulate the more remote laws of being. *Eastern* psychologists—the masters of occult science—are therefore right in asserting that to form a true conception of the nature and potentialities of mind, it is necessary to develop faculties which enable the inquirer to rise altogether above the plane of our present consciousness. The contradictions and barrenness of the European "science" of mind are too palpable to escape remark even from the most unobservant critic. At the present day instead of being merely the accessory support to, Physiology has become the *basis* of, Psychology. The revival of mysticism, however, justifies us in questioning the durability of this tendency to subordinate the mental to the physical. Impermanency of influence is not the least noticable feature of Western metaphysical speculation—a fact which has unquestionally caused the study of psychology and philosophical subjects generally to be now regarded by the majority of persons with positive aversion. **The Truth has long proved a Will o' the Wisp to the Pure** Reason. When intellectual giants like Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Mill and Bain only succeed in evolving mutually-exclusive and contradictory systems, it is evident that the physical intelligence must eventually resign its

1 H. T. Buckle, "Hist. of Civilisation in England," Vol. I, p. 165–6.

place to INTUITION in the search after Abstract Knowledge. But we are digressing.

The solution proposed of the long-standing problem before us is based on the philosophy of our Revered Teachers. It concedes a portion of truth to the speculations both of the Associationalists and Sensationalists. While it relegates the *primary* acquisition of such ideas to Sensation it declares them to be *innate in the mind of the human infant.* The Esoteric Doctrine shows the differentiation of individualities—*i. e.* the capacity of mind to exist as an entity apart from brain on the dissolution of its material substratum —taking place in the higher animal kingdom. It is admitted that animals acquire their notions of time, space, etc.,—where present—from sensation, as described by the Associationalists. On the other hand owing to the *impress* of these ideas in the soul[1] in its upward evolutionary journey, they are undoubtedly, as claimed by the Intuitionalists, innate in the human "subject"—the *generalized experience of former objective existences rising once again into consciousness.* If this contention is true we have here a solution in the light of the Esoteric Doctrine of one of the most stoutly debated of metaphysical problems.

E. D. Fawcett.

Paracelsus.

II.

It is a notable fact that the life of Paracelsus formed the theme for the first important work of one of the greatest of modern poets, Robert Browning, in whom the mystical tendency forms one of the strongest characteristics of his thought. *Paracelsus* is a wonderful composition; almost marvelous when it is considered that it was written when the poet was but 28 years old. It exhibits a noble maturity of intellect; in the exalted spirituality of its thought it has never been surpassed by any of the poet's subsequent works. Its shows that Browning had a true appreciation of the greatness of the Master. In his note he says that he has taken very trifling liberties with his subject and that "the reader may slip the foregoing scenes between the leaves of any memoir of Paracelsus he pleases, by way of commentary." Browning must have studied the writings of Paracelsus closely, and with his inner vision, for throughout the poem there runs a deep vein of occultism. Although he has followed the historical accounts of the Master, and therefore depicts some blemishes upon his character which could hardly have existed in reality, it seems not unlikely that a mind of the lofty spiritual quality of Browning's may, in its aspiration for true knowledge of his

1 The higher portion of the 5th principle (Manas) which united with the Buddhi constitutes the "Transcendental Subject" of Kant and du Prel, the Monad. This Higher Self—the *individuality* as opposed to its innumerable *faint reflects* in physical incarnation—passes from birth to birth and like a bee amidst flowers, only absorbs into its essence the loftiest experiences—the honey—of each terrestrial life: consequently it will be apparent that the decision of the question "How much of our present personality will be immortal?" rests wholly with ourselves.

theme, have been impressed by that of Paracelsus himself, or of the one formerly known by that name.

The poem has the form of a drama in five acts. The first act has its scene at Würzburg, where Paracelsus is studying under Tritheim, in 1512, a youth of 19 years. With him is Festus, his boyhood's friend, older than he, and Michal, the betrothed of Festus. The three are together in a garden, and Paracelsus is about to enter upon his long wanderings through the world. To these two he confides the secret of his aspirations. Festus, who has a conservative nature, endeavors to dissuade him from his enterprise, and to pursue knowledge in the ordinary channels. Paracelsus then tells something of the extraordinary nature which has distinguished him from his fellowmen. He says :

"From childhood I have been possessed
By a fire—by a true fire, or faint or fierce,
As from without some master, so it seemed,
Repressed or urged its current : this but ill
Expresses what I would convey—but rather
I will believe an angel ruled me thus,
Than that my soul's own workings, own high nature,
So become manifest. I knew not then
What whispered in the evening, and spoke out
At midnight. If some mortal, born too soon,
Were laid away in some great trance—the ages
Coming and going all the while—till dawned
His true time's advent, and could then record
The words they spoke who kept watch by his bed,—
Then I might tell more of the breath so light
Upon my eyelids, and the fingers warm
Among my hair. Youth is confused : yet never
So dull was I but, when that spirit passed,
I turned to him, scarce consciously, as turns
A water-snake when fairies cross his sleep."

These words characterize the born Adept and show that the poet really apprehended the nature of the memories of past existences.

Paracelsus confesses how the impulse was ever with him to devote himself to the good of mankind and do some great work in its behalf. In his youth, as he sat under Tritheim's teachings, he felt somehow that a mighty power was brooding, taking shape within him, and this lasted till one night, as he sat revolving it more and more, a still voice from without spoke to him, and then it was that he first discovered his aim's extent,

"Which sought to comprehend the works of God,
And God himself, and all God's intercourse
With the human mind."

The voice continued :

"'There is a way—
'Tis hard for flesh to tread therein, imbued
With frailty—hopeless, if indulgence first

Have ripened inborn germs of sin to strength:
Wilt thou adventure for my sake and man's,
Apart from all reward?' And last it breathed—
'Be happy my good soldier; I am by thee,
Be sure, even to the end!'—I answered not,
Knowing Him. As He spoke, I was endued
With comprehension and a steadfast will;
And when He ceased, my brow was sealed His own.
If there took place no special change in me,
How comes it all things wore a different hue
Thenceforward?—pregnant with vast consequence—
Teeming with grand results—loaded with fate;
So that when quailing at the mighty range
Of secret truths which yearn for birth, I haste
To contemplate undazzled some one truth,
Its bearings and effects alone—at once
What was a speck expands into a star,
Asking a life to pass exploring thus,
Till I near craze."

This voice is that which speaks to all true Mystics. It is the higher Self that speaks; the voice of the Warrior, spoken of in *Light on the Path*, "He is thyself, yet infinitely wiser and stronger than thyself." It may also be the voice of a Master, as well. For, at the stage where the bonds of the personality are loosened, the sense of separateness has disappeared, and the higher Self of one is that of all. In this passage, the poet gives beautiful utterance to the fact of the spiritual rebirth, the moment when the lower consciousness becomes united with the higher.

Again, in the following words, the fact of reincarnation is expressed:

"At times I almost dream
I too have spent a life the sages' way,
And tread once more familiar paths. Perchance
I perished in an arrogant self-reliance
An age ago; and in that act, a prayer
For one more chance went up so earnest, so
Instinct with better light let in by Death,
That life was blotted out—not so completely
But scattered wrecks enough of it remain,
Dim memories; as now, when seems once more
The goal in sight again."

This feeling of the truth of reincarnation finds utterance throughout Browning's work. It would be difficult to account for the greatness of a person like Paracelsus except under the theory of pre-existence.

"The dim star that burns within," and the reason for its dimness, is gloriously expressed in the following words:

"Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise
From outward things, whate'er you may believe:
There is an inmost center in us all,
Where truth abides in fulness; and around

Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in,
This perfect clear perception – which is truth ;
A baffling and perverting carnal mesh
Blinds it, and makes all error : and '*to know*'
Rather consists in opening out a way
Whence the imprisoned splendor may escape,
Than in effecting entry for a light
Supposed to be without. Watch narrowly
The demonstration of a truth, its birth,
And you trace back the effluence to its spring
And source within us, where broods radiance vast,
To be elicited ray by ray, as chance
Shall favor."

This passage, which is pure mysticism, is too long to quote entire, but the reader will find that it continues in the same exalted strain, showing how the unveiling of the soul, the higher self, may, through various means, be accomplished by what seems chance, or, as it says in *Through the Gates of Gold*, man may "tear the veil that hides him from the eternal at any point where it is easiest for him to do so ; the most often this point will be where he least expects to find it." The poet has seen clearly, with Paracelsus himself, how it is that matter bars in the spirit, and he asks :

"May not truth be lodged alike in all,
The lowest as the highest? some slight film
The interposing bar which binds it up,
And makes the idiot, just as makes the sage
Some film removed, the happy outlet whence
Truth issues proudly? See this soul of ours!
How it strives weakly in the child, is loosed
In manhood, clogged by sickness, back compelled
By age and waste, set free at last by death :
Why is it, flesh enthralls it or enthrones?
What is this flesh we have to penetrate?
O not alone when life flows still do truth
And power emerge, but also when strange chance
Ruffles its current ; in unused conjuncture,
When sickness breaks the body—hunger, watching,
Excess or languor,—oftenest death's approach—
Peril, deep joy, or woe."

It was to give clearer hints for this setting free of the soul that *Through the Gates of Gold* was written. In the second act Browning shows us Paracelsus in Constantinople in the year 1521, where history tells that he was at that time, having spent something like seven years in the Orient, "among the Tartars," a term that permits a wide range for his whereabouts. The Master was accordingly then 28 years old. He is said to have received the "Philospher's stone," in reality the Great Jewel or Master Stone, described in the beautiful story called "Papyrus,"—printed in the March PATH—from a German Adept, Solomon Trismosinus. Browning, however, lays the scene at

"the House of the Greek conjuror." This act, though very beautiful, is of slight value historically, as it was designed to carry out the motive of the poem that Paracelsus failed by seeking to attain his end through knowledge alone, leaving love out of account. In this regard Browning failed to grasp the full greatness of the Master, for Paracelsus could not have held his exalted position in the Rosicrucian brotherhood without being inspired by the most unbounded love for humanity.

To carry out this idea of the necessity of both knowledge and love, Browning introduces an Italian poet, Aprile, who has sought to attain the same end as Paracelsus through love alone. Aprile dies in the arms of Paracelsus and thus teaches him the lesson of love. This passage may be taken as symbolic of the union of the distinctive traits of the individuals and the assimilation of their essences by him who has arrived at the stage of killing out the sense of separateness. This is shown in the words addressed by Paracelsus to Aprile:

> "Are we not halves of one dissevered world,
> Whom this strange chance unites once more? Part? never!
> Till thou, the lover, know; and I, the knower,
> Love—until both are saved."

In this act are the following glorious words spoken by the dying Aprile:

> "God is the PERFECT POET,
> Who in creation acts his own conceptions.
> Shall man refuse to be ought less than God?
> Man's weakness is his glory—for the strength
> Which raises him to heaven and near God's self,
> Came spite of it: God's strength his glory is,
> For thence came with our weakness sympathy
> Which brought God down to earth, a man like us."

We will pass over the next two acts as comparatively unimportant to our purpose. In the last act we find Paracelsus, in the year 1541, at the age of 48, dying at Salzburg, alone with his faithful friend Festus. He tells Festus of the sensations of his dying moments in a passage in which occur inspired words, depicting the soul in the state of Eternity, where time and space are as nought. He tells Festus "You are here to be instructed. I will tell God's message," and he describes his experiences on the threshold of the Eternal as containing his entire past life:

> "If I select
> Some special epoch from the crowd, 'tis but
> To will and straight the rest dissolve away,
> And only that particular state is present,
> With all its long-forgotten circumstance,
> Distinct and vivid as at first—myself
> A careless looker-on, and nothing more!
> Indifferent and amused, but nothing more!
> And this is death: I understand it all.
> New being waits me; new perceptions must
> Be born in me before I plunge therein;

Which last is Death's affair, and while I speak,
Minute by minute he is filling me
With power; and while my foot is on the threshold
Of boundless life—the doors unopened yet,
All preparations not complete within—
I turn new knowledge upon old events,
And the effect is—But I must not tell;
It is not lawful."

What follows may be taken, perhaps, in a sense, for a mystic initiation. Mustering superhuman strength Paracelsus stands upon his couch, dons his scarlet cloak lined with fur, puts his chain around his neck, his signet ring is on his finger, and last he takes his good sword, his trusty Azoth, in his grasp for the last time, and says:

"This couch shall be my throne: I bid these walls
Be consecrate; this wretched cell become
A shrine; for here God speaks to men through me:"

Then he tells the story of his birth to power, and of the wisdom he has attained. He tells how

"I stood at first where all aspire at last
To stand: the secret of the world was mine.
I knew, I felt, (perception unexpressed,
Uncomprehended by our narrow thought,
But somehow felt and known in every shift
And change in the spirit,—nay, in every pore
Of the body, even,)—what God is, what we are,
What life is—how God tastes an infinite joy
In infinite ways—one everlasting bliss,
From whom all being emanates, all power
Proceeds; in whom is life forevermore,
Yet whom existence in its lowest form
Includes."

It is a long address, and so full of the most spiritual thought that it seems a pity space will not allow it to be quoted entire. There is one passage which corresponds very closely to a passage in Hartmann's work, from one of Paracelsus's writings, describing the union in man of the attributes of this sphere of life which had, here and there

"Been scattered o'er the visible world before,
Asking to be combined—dim fragments meant
To be united in some wondrous whole—
Imperfect qualities throughout creation,
Suggesting some one creature yet to make—
Some point where all those scattered rays should meet
Convergent in the faculties of man."

This point of convergence is spoken of in *Through the Gates of Gold* as "that primeval place which is the only throne of God,—that place whence forms of life emerge and to which they return. That place is the central point of existence, where there is a permanent spot of life as there is in the midst of the heart of man."

Again we see the same subject treated in the closing part of the *Gates of Gold*, the mighty results to be attained through the subjugation of the animal nature in man to the godly nature, looked forward to by Paracelsus, as Browning makes him speak, with prophetic vision, in the following words:

"But when full roused, each giant limb awake,
Each sinew strung, the great heart pulsing fast,
He shall start up, and stand on his own earth,
And so begin his long triumphant march,
And date his being thence,—thus wholly roused,
What he achieves shall be set down to him!
When all the race is perfected alike
As Man, that is: all tended to mankind,
And, man produced, all has its end thus far;
But in completed man begins anew
A tendency to God."

And it is given significantly, as a trait of completed man, that such

"Outgrow all
The narrow creeds of right and wrong, which fade
Before the unmeasured thirst for good; while peace
Rises within them ever more and more.
Such men are even now upon the earth,
Serene amid the half-formed creatures round,
Who should be saved by them and joined with them."

These words of Paracelsus are almost the last in the poem:

"As yet men cannot do without contempt—
'Tis for their good, and therefore fit awhile
That they reject the weak, and scorn the false,
Rather than praise the strong and true, in me.
But after, they will know me!
If I stoop into a dark tremendous sea of cloud,
It is but for a time; I press God's lamp
Close to my breast—its splendor, soon or late,
Will pierce the gloom: I shall emerge one day!

We believe that the time is not far distant when he will be understood, will be known, and shall emerge. S. B.

Suggestions As to Primary Concepts.

(*Continued from April number.*)

In our former article we had arrived at the fact of consciousness, as the representative of the noumenal in existence. Consciousness is also the alembic in which the experiences of the outer life are precipitated. It may justly then, be called the *central sun* of individual existence. Consciousness is not the one life, nor is it spirit, though it partakes of both, for life is diffused and participated in by plants and animals, in which may also be dis-

cerned the dawn, or germs of consciousness. But as the life of man on the physical side has its root in matter, so the life of man on the noumenal side has its root in spirit. Matter and spirit are thus the two extremes of cosmic substance. We may say crudely, that spirit precipitated, consolidated, is matter, while the intermediate condition is the ether. Oken has shown that self-consciousness belongs only to man. An animal is conscious of hunger or lust, and follows blindly the all absorbing passion, but no animal is self-conscious, that is: conscious of self, as a whole. A very common mistake is made in reading accounts of creation recorded in ancient scripture, in regarding it (creation) as a process once for all completed, when the fact is that the process of creation is forever repeated, and the process is for ever the same, and we can observe it now as "at the dawn of creation:" "eternity," applying to a limitless past, as to an endless future. Another fatal mistake may here be pointed out, though not in its natural order, and that is the vagueness of our concepts of the idea "God." Our ideas of God can have but two sources, viz: external nature and internal nature of man, there are no other sources from which the God-idea can be derived. From the one—nature at large—our ideas of an underlying force holding the stellar orbs in place and moving them in cyclic order, adjusting and adapting all things great and small are purely Pantheistic. From the other—the inner nature of man—endowed with intelligence, love, and aspiration, our ideas are purely anthropomorphic, and these two views of the ONE, the BOUNDLESS, are not, as commonly supposed, antagonistic, but perfectly consistent, as will presently appear for the idea is not only fortified by scripture, but no other concept can for a moment be entertained when this is once comprehended, for it illuminates alike the soul of man and the sacred page.

Mr. J. Ralston Skinner, a most able Caballist, thus translates the first utterance of the books of Moses: "*In* (or out of) *His own essence as a womb, God, in the manifestation of two opposites in force, created the two heavens, i. e., the upper, or light, and the lower or dark;* signifying the equivalents of *heat* and *cold, day* and *night, expansion* and *contraction, summer* and *winter;* in short, the all embracing cosmic relations.[1]"

The meaning of this and its exceeding value will not at once appear to one who has not carefully considered its bearings. It is well known that the word here translated as God is *Elohim*, and that it is plural, and while this fact has been ignored in the current version, the real idea has at the same time been lost sight of. The idea of One Power operating in a two-fold way or by opposites, will be found to be not only a key to the text, but to cosmic unfoldment. Our primary concepts must agree with the constitution and existence of things, or they are worthless, and but little investigation is required to show us that this idea of polarity or

1 "The Ancient of Days" by J. Ralston Skinner, p. 39.

DUALITY,

lies at the foundation of all created things, and when it is once clearly apprehended it furnishes a key to creative energy. The following table will illustrate this antithesis, though it is approximate and by no means exhaustive, but if found true in principle it may assist to more exact and comprehensive concepts.

TRUTH.

	Science.	Nature.	God	Philosophy.
		Matter	Mind	
		Phenomenal	Noumenal	
		Physics	Metaphysics	
		Divinity	Unity	
		Objective	Subjective	
	Natural, by Evolution.	Mind	Spirit	Spiritual, by Involution.
Analysis.		Reason	Intuition	Synthesis.
		Motion	Rest	
		Shape	Form	
		Time	Eternity	
		Darkness	Light	
	Politics.	Negative	Positive	Religion.
		Real	Ideal	
		Human	Divine	
		Satan	Elohim	
		Male	Female	

KNOWLEDGE.

Let it be borne in mind that our present purpose is not to build up a system or elaborate a theory, but to suggest concepts which are fundamental in the nature of things, and which therefore must be included in all systems of thought that undertake to grasp existence. This duality of existence is so intimately blended in our every day experience as to be practically overlooked. Moreover, owing to the materialistic tendency of the age, it is the custom to express spirit in terms of matter, and so to ignore practically one-half of existence. It may readily be seen that volumes might be written to illustrate this antithesis of nature, or the duality of existence.

Now it must be borne in mind that all living organisms spring from a germ, and that in the preparation or vivification of this germ, male and female elements or agencies are employed. Here then are the conditions in which to observe the processes of creation, and these conditions are by no means past finding out.

A vivified organic cell contains potentially the complete organism, and by its study we learn not only the process in any given case, but *nature's plan*.

Every germ is therefore a *Center of Life*. In the vivification of the germ or cell, both male and female elements are employed. All activities whether in germ, or completed organism, consist in currents or movement to, and from the center, *i. e.*, outflowing and inflowing, or "circulation," and development is *always a living equation*, of which *evolution is one-half* and *involution the other half*, in strict accordance with the basic condition of duality. We hear a great deal nowadays of the "polarity of the human body." A magnet is a body whether of iron or "flesh" in which there is an orderly or systematic arrangement of the polarity of its atoms, molecules, or cells, and this polar arrangement may be according to a single system, or a series of systems, the lower subordinate to the higher, as in animals or man. Crystallization and organization depend on this systematic polar arrangement. Every cell of a living body (as of a magnetic bar of steel the atoms) is a polarized cell, for to say that it "lives" is to say that it is dual, *i. e.*, polarized.[1]

A hint in this direction is all that time and space will at present allow, yet the philosophical continuity of concepts must be apparent, and the more the idea is followed out and unfolded, the more apparent will the truth and universality of these concepts become.

All this is best comprised and comprehended in the language of symbolism. Let us imagine in space or in the Ether a "geometrical point," (say where two rays of light cross or intersect). This geometrical point is "position without dimension," *i. e.*, an "ideal point." Now let this "ideal" point become "real," that is let it "*appear*" as the light, the water, and the dry land "appear" as recorded in the sacred text.

Coincident with this appearance, at this point is the birth of matter and force from the bosom of ether or the womb of cosmos; movement of the atom is the result. It "whirls in space" viz., in the ether, it has an "atmosphere" of its own, is a world in itself, a minature world, and its new relations to the surrounding ether assigns it a "circumference," it is polarized, evolves and involves, *i. e.*, has centre and circumference the moment it *realizes* existence. This is the "centre that is everywhere and the circumference that is nowhere." This centre of "cosmic dust" is at first "without form and void." The spirit of all things is at its center, as it floats in the ocean of ether; its primary or cosmic form is a globule, and its first evolution is an emanation from its centre, but as it is polarized this emanation occurs in opposite directions. If in one direction only, it would form a radius, but in opposite directions it forms an equator or diameter line. Matter, space, time and motion are thereby for it determined. It is definitely related to itself and its surroundings. These relations are, for diameter 1; for circumference 3.14159+ or π. It will be seen that these

1 See Herbert Spencer's "Physical Synthesis" Part 5—Psychology.

are the facts and the true relations as we find them, and it matters not whether these emanations from the bosom of the ether occur singly, or in groups of myriads, or sufficient to form a planet, the principle is the same. If each atom so emanating associates with fellows this association must be by virtue of inherent similarity, attraction, or consonant rhythm. These basic principles may be conveniently studied in the process of crystallization, and are exemplified in every snowflake formed from a drop of water, as in the unfolding of every germ, leaf, or flower. We now see that there is a *world* of meaning in the Smaragdine Tablet to which we have previously referred; only those ridicule it who are too stupid to understand, or too conceited to "consider the lilies," and who will therefore never behold them arrayed in all their glory.

J. D. Buck.

(*To be continued.*)

Some Teachings of a German Mystic.

I.

DREAMS AND THE INNER LIFE.

[From the German of J. Kernning.[1]]

The first spiritual evidences to which a certain student was referred were the phenomena of dreams. Here the reader will be as astonished as was that student, for he cannot comprehend how such common manifestations can serve as foundation for the greatest of teachings, the doctrine of Immortality. But just in this respect we must admire the loving care of the primeval Creative Power, inasmuch as it has laid its first proof so close at hand, thereby blessing us with an unceasing call to enter into its school and learn its lessons.

Dreams, it will be said, are illusions; therefore they are no proof of the truth of any doctrine. Dreams are illusions; this cannot be gainsaid. But they nevertheless present pictures whose existence can be denied by no one, therefore they form a more substantial substructure than the ordinary inferences put together with doctrinal correctness, with which the head is filled, but which leave the emotions unaffected.

Dreams have no value for the ordinary scholar because they are without objectivity; or, in common speech, because the object of the dream does not come into contact with the senses. For instance, when a person appears to us in a dream that person knows nothing about it, and from

1 These selections are translated from a work of Kernning's called "Paths to the Immortal" (Wege zur Unsterblichkeit). Kernning's works, giving practical hints for the attainment of the ends which are the aim of all true Theosophists, were written thirty years ago and more, and show that the spirit of the Rosicrucians, though the world has heard little of its activity in the land where the brotherhood was most prominent in the middle ages, is to-day by no means dead.

this it is concluded that evidences resting upon such a phenomenon are inadmissible. But, since the spirit sees all things in its own light, in pictures of its own creation, this objection loses its force, for it is just in this way that the independence of spiritual activity is shown, in that it has the power to create everything out of itself.

I do not know whether I express myself plainly enough here, or whether subterfuges may not yet be made to attack this first degree in the process of recognition of a life in the spirit. I maintain that the case is as clear as the sun. Therefore we will leave each one to think for himself which view is the better founded, and content ourselves with challenging those who declare the creations of our dreams to be nothing, to name a similar power which works and creates with such ease and vividness and which, as in the case of our dreams, comprehends within itself everything belonging to life.

The phenomena of dreams have, to be sure, no positive lesson for the ordinary uses of life, since they are not expressions of our free will. They come and go without our consent, and no one can say, I will now dream this or that. We are limited in this respect, and we must submit to whatever occurrences within us that the aroused powers may be pleased to permit. This fact, however, does not diminish the peculiar value of the phenomenon ; on the contrary, it shows us that there exists a power beyond us which does not trouble itself about our apparent will.

The functions of the inner life are unceasingly active ; they need no rest, no relaxation. When the man, at his own pleasure, can establish an equilibrium with these functions, enabling himself to see, hear and feel their manifestations whenever he may choose to perceive them, then those manifestations become our own possessions, giving us that which we demand, and then for the first time attaining truth and significance in our estimation.

Dreams and voluntary seership are the two poles of spiritual activity, and upon these are founded the teachings of immortality held by all religions.

Thoughts in Solitude.

IV.

As said Solomon the wise, "there is no new thing under the sun." Our thoughts are but the thoughts of preceding ages. That this must be so will be apparent when one considers the Eternity behind. All possibilities of nature must have been realized and all thoughts thought in the—to us—dim past. And while the wheel of evolution still turns this must be so. At the apex of the orbit in each revolution, a few of the greatest souled ones have attained emancipation, a few have been able to lift the latch of the Golden Gate. But the remainder of the candidates in nature's school who have failed at the final test have again to begin the weary round, along

with those evolving from lower conditions, with only so much light to guide them through the labyrinth of life as may have been enshrined in the traditions or religions evolved during the previous efflorescence of Humanity. How are they to regain the thoughts of the past and obtain some true interpretation of the mystery of life? All thoughts indeed are writ in the Akasa from which the Prophets and Poets of all ages have drawn their inspiration, and in proportion to a man's striving to get below the mere surface of things, will be the degree in which he succeeds in making part of that inheritance of the ages his own possession.

The scholar too would seem to have a part to play. What worthier object can be his than that of rendering intelligible in the speech of his epoch, the thoughts and ideas enshrined in the dead languages of the great thinking races of the past? The scholars of to-day, those who have drunk deep at the wells of Sanscrit and Greek learning, have indeed a heavy responsibility upon their shoulders. Were it not a worthier aim of life to make common property the thoughts and ideas of the sublime ancients than to wrap themselves as so many do—though there are one or two notable and glorious exceptions—in the self-gratulation of exclusive culture and stagnate in the memory of past achievement?

Those too who are animated by the Theosophic spirit, and who feel the supreme desirability of the path they are striving to tread, are bound to find words more or less appropriate to carry to the world a conviction of this supreme desirability, words which may convey some idea of the animating life within which is quite as much an embodiment of the scientific spirit of the seeker after truth, and the single-eyed determination of the man of the world to achieve his object, as of any devotional or religious feeling. Religion—in Christian countries at least—has been made far too much a thing of sentiment, it has its use no doubt in prompting to the initial effort, but when the path is chosen it would seem that singleheartedness of aim and firm determination were the dominant qualities required.

The thought that prompted the present paper was expressed in a foot note written by a friend in that mystical work of the middle ages "Theologia Germanica." The text expresses the thought that all that is, is well pleasing and good in God's eyes, while the foot note by citing one out of the many instances of earthly action so diametrically opposed to what the most optimistic could consider as pleasing to God, commands as the necessary corollary to the text its converse proposition.

Search as deeply as we may into Nature's life, and obtain though we may some intuition of the love which may be regarded as "creation's final law," that law in its working throughout all objective existence must still appear to us as unutterably hideous. The cosmos exists indeed for those who have extended enough vision, in other words the faith to see it, its

picture may be seen in the depths of the soul, that very throne of God, but to us who tread the pathways of the world, who are daily brought in contact with the social evils of this generation, the crime, the ignorance, the poverty, the suffering, how can such existence appear to us other than a chaos? Is it not a veritable Hell on Earth? But is there no "best Philosophy" such as Shelley speaks of

"Whose taste
"Makes this cold common Hell—our life—a doom
"As glorious as a fiery martyrdom?"

The reproach of being unpractical is often made against those who are deeply imbued with the philosophic spirit—they may not have the ready panacea for the cure of existing evils demanded by the philanthropist, whose partial remedy he is so apt to consider as such, and to apply with ill-considered action—but they who look deep down see the real remedy, though their words may fall as vain sounds on the ears of the world.

The forces too that have long been set in motion are not lightly to be diverted from the goal towards which they have been hastening, and that goal is for us beginning to loom but too clearly in view. That child born of man's deep seated sense of justice (perverted though it may be) out of the dam, dire poverty, the shrieking red-clad socialist stalks among us, and following the inevitable law of retribution, over the people who have fallen deepest in the slough of materialism, and have been most dominated by the lusts of the flesh, is beginning to tremble the moan of the coming storm, while in their most populous cities the cries rise loudest. It may be too late now entirely to ward off the storm, but surely its fury might be mitigated were we even now to read the lesson aright.

To a people whose upper classes are pandered to by nameless lusts, and whose lower classes breed like beasts of the field, without recognizing, as the beasts do, a non-breeding season, to this adulterous and lascivious generation were it not a worthy aim to show by word and deed that *it is* possible to dissociate love from lust, and that the loftiest emotion of which Humanity is capable has no necessary connection with the sexual bond? But what advance can be made till society recognizes that instead of offering a premium on marriage, they rather are worthy of admiration who can guard inviolate the sacred seed, under the influence of an aim the worldling knows not of—the aim of transferring the life-force from the material into the spiritual plane, with whatever results may accrue from this transformation of energy, of transcendental powers, or sweeter far the realization of the Platonic dream of union with our other half, the finding that within ourselves lay the twin soul which has been the object of our life-long search, in other words that in the microcosm, man, as in the macrocosm, God, are contained both the male and the female elements of existence.

What a contrast to this age of materiality to read of that old time

when to prevent the depopulation of the country, it was necessary to enjoin each true-hearted Brahman to marry and beget one child before devoting himself to the main object of existence which should be to-day as it was then, the practise of Yoga.

But besides helping to counteract the dominant evil of our time another reason can be given for the practise of celibacy, though this lies more on the interior plane, and is therefore more a subject of speculation. For it is a satisfaction to think that by refusing further to swell the already overteeming populations, the ranks of the unborn are lessened to a smaller degree, that a few more souls continue to enjoy the rosy dreams of Heaven.

But though the general acceptance of a less gross form of life would greatly tend towards the amelioration of human existence, to expect it from this generation would seem like putting the effect before the cause, for what is there to impel towards any curbing of the passions while Ignorance holds almost undivided sway? All evils under which Humanity groans may indeed be ascribed to that baleful influence, and it is useless to lop off one of the hydra heads of the monster, while she is capable of replacing it by a still more hideous growth. Andromeda truly pictures Humanity to-day, but where is the redeemer Perseus to be looked for save under the shining garb of the occult wisdom? The worldly knowledge with its glittering train of physical sciences and mechanical inventions can never set Humanity free, it but weaves round its votaries still more deluding webs of darkness. But we may hope that Reason will once more "shed her beams of dawn" over the dim world, and that true faith will once more shine in the hearts of men, for when the knowledge has filtered in that this life is but one of an endless chain of similar existences, will not the futility of gratifying every whim of the senses, which must so often before have been gratified give place to the desire for freedom from such dominance, and to the yearning for some more lasting bliss? and when it is realized that our present thoughts and acts are the factors that determine our future lives and that the pain (or joy) of the present is the retribution of the past, will not a goad be fixed in the hearts of many to drive them on the right way? and finally, when it is dimly perceived that the soul in past existences has experienced all heights and depths of earthly things—has realized all the sweets of wealth, of honor, of power, of love—that the bitter has been very bitter indeed and that the sweetest of the sweet has failed to give permanent satisfaction, will there not spring up in the soul a deep distaste for this loathsome life, a firm intent to pierce the veil of Maya that hides from us the celestial region?

This piercing of the veil, or to adopt a simile which will carry us a little further, this scaling of the mountain is conceived of in very different ways. To some it seems as the culmination of one gigantic effort, to others as the result of infinitely slow progress. It is now pictured as "the killing of the

deadly serpent of self for which Supreme moment is needed a strength such as no hero of the battle field needs." Elsewhere it is described as the steadfast toil of the will "till efforts end in ease and thought has passed from thinking," as the gradual centreing of all thought in the eternal thought till all earth-born desires and fears die out through sheer lack of the nourishment whereby they may be kept alive. The truth may lie in the union of these two apparently contradictory modes of thought, or it may be that as the different natures of men impel them to different lines of action, the pathways are really different though conducting to the same goal, or it may be suggested that the desperate effort referred to above, the supreme moment when the strength of the hero is needed, may be symbolised in the action of one of the mountain climbers, who has strayed from the true mountain side, into some rocky cul-de-sac, up some misleading pinnacle. A desperate leap will doubtless be required of him to reach the true breast of the mountain again. But he who has started on the ascent with a true guide will not mistake the rocky pinnacle for the snow-clad summit. His progress will be fast or slow as the strength and will within him shall decide. Therefore to the aspirant should it ever seem like the steady ascent of the mountain for which are demanded all his combined energies of courage, prudence and steadfastness. And as the summit is approached, all dread anticipation of what the future may bring as well as the fever of personal desire and earthly passion will be left behind like the mist of the valley. Hope and Fear alike will disappear in the purity of that serene air.

And the love which could no longer identify itself with any one object of desire, or find any resting place on earth will have been gradually purged from all taint of animal passion, and will daily become more Godlike in its diffusion, until personal likes and dislikes melt away before its intensity of worship of the one supreme Perfection. All appearances of difference will then be blotted out—friends and enemies, kinsmen and aliens, yea, good and evil men—all will appear alike—for God only will be seen in all, and the bliss of Yoga will be attained. PILGRIM.

TEA TABLE TALK.

The Tea Table witnessed a strange discussion last week, between Didymus and Quickly. I have not hitherto alluded to the latter, who is a man of remarkable will power, to which his psychic development and training have not a little contributed. He sat chatting with the ladies on this occasion, when Didymus, walking in, remarked to him:—"Ah! old man, I've just come from your office."

"You mean at noon, when you left me to go to the Stewart sale with Miss Polly."

"Oh! but I changed my mind," said she.

"Of course! Why mention it?" said I, and got that rare thing from a woman, a natural (as well as expressive) look.

"So," continued Didymus to Quickly, "I went back to your den. It was just 3:20 by Old Trinity as I entered."

"Well! I've been there since 2 o'clock," said Quickly.

"You weren't though, for I stood at your door looking straight in, and I'll swear you were not there."

"My dear boy, I sat down to my desk at 3 P. M. noting that I had just ¾ of an hour to spare, and never rose till 3:40 when I came up here."

"But I say, how could I be mistaken? I passed your clerks in the outer office and went right to your den. It's small, rather bare, no nooks, no closets, bright sunlight streaming in. There was your chair standing empty. I looked all over the place; a cat couldn't have hidden there."

Quickly was silent. His color changed slightly. The two men eyed each other; then Quickly diverted the conversation. With all due modesty, I may say I have the quickness of a Gordon setter on an occult trail, and as the laws of the Tea Table provide that all such experiences, once broached, must be held as common property among this little band of earnest seekers, I called the meeting to order and Quickly to account.

"Well,"—said he, slowly, "Didymus bade me farewell for the day at noon, as he was going to the sale. At 3:10 P. M. I was reading some very private letters,—in fact—they related to high themes in occultism. As I read, I suddenly thought of Didymus, and the strange idea flashed throngh my head that he might perhaps return and see the letters in my hands. In my then frame of mind,—for I am a queer chap that way sometimes,—I had a positive throb of horror lest he might come in and see them, and I mentally went over a little farce of dropping them out of sight."

"You needn't have done that, old man," said Didymus.

"I know it," rejoined the other with his shrewd nod, "but the whole thing passed through me as I tell you. The letters related to matters which went to the very roots of my life, and it seemed as if I couldn't stand their being seen just at first."

A sympathetic movement ran like a wave through the group and showed that Quickly was understood by all.

"I was in a direct line from my door," resumed he. "It was 10 feet off, and the light very bright. At 3:25 I finished reading them, and had seen no one. I wrote a letter, finished it at 3:40 and came straight up here. I can swear I never left my room from 3 to 3:40 P. M."

"And if the lives of those dearest to me depended on it, I would have sworn that you were not there. I stood in front of your chair at 3:20 for several moments; your clerks saw me come and go."

Of course this strange occurrence was discussed at more length, but the facts remained the same. Can we explain them? I think so. We know that Adepts possess the power of becoming invisible at will, and that one of the methods employed consists in mesmerizing the lookers on, so that they do not perceive him who so wills it. All that is required is the institution of a certain vibration through a strong *self-conscious* will. This Quickly has not. But reading those letters relating to the higher self had so raised his vibrations and intensified his psychic perception, that when the inner self raised a note of alarm at the approach of Didymus, and the idea of discovery was conveyed to the normal consciousness of Quickly, the will to remain unseen

was so intense that unknown to his mind, his soul emitted or employed that vibration necessary to set up such an akasic disturbance as would perturb the sight of a looker on. This sight depended upon the transmission of certain vibrations to the optic nerve, and these were wanting. Many such incidents happen to those whose psychic senses are gradually unfolding, and when well attested, as in this case, are useful hints to fellow students.

The widow remarked with a sigh that it would be dreadful if such powers were general among men. Hereupon the Professor innocently asked why.

"My dear Sir! To be able to make themselves invisible? Fancy how they would impose upon their poor wives then!"

I quickly put in the trite:—"Set a thief,—" but it was no use. Madame had the laugh on us there. I turned it however by suggesting that Theosophy might improve all that.

"What? By keeping us shut up like eastern women?"

"Things are better there than you ladies can believe. Among the orthodox Brahmins of India for instance, the marriage and betrothal bonds are very strong. There is said to be an actual transfer of Karma between husband and wife. He takes upon himself half the effects of all her bad Karma, incurred from the day of her betrothal until her death or excommunication, that is, until the tie between them is duly severed. Betrothal is very sacred among Hindus, and they hold this Karmic transfer to be a reality, because the contract is a solemn and purely religious ceremony, at which all the Gods, Rishis and the Law Itself are invoked as witnesses of the agreement. From the fourth year of age children are brought up in this belief, and for months before the betrothal as for years thereafter, they are constantly reminded of this principle of transfer, and that it has been one of the chief reasons for marriage. If the girl does a wrong thing or thinks a wrong thought, she naturally remembers her contract and in most cases, through piety, unselfishness or instinctive affection, she repents or refrains. Similarly, any good thought entertained by the youth, as well as the merit of pilgrimages and religious obervances, being divided with his wife, invariably brings her to his mind, and so strengthens the occult bond by faith."

The ladies liked this idea, and the Professor added that it was "a self respecting sort of institution, whereby man and woman stood by their own, which was really quite up to Anglo-Saxon moral principles!" A chorus arose of "If you can't stand by your own, by whom can you stand?"

Ah! my friends, that's true enough, but like most truths, somewhat neglected. We Anglo-Saxons are not so staunch as we believe ourselves to be often because we do not study or grasp the detailed workings of occult Law. There are many theosophists, for instance, who announce their adherence to a doctrine, or a truth, and who are at the same time pleased to state that they "take no stock" in the Founders of the Society, or in certain Adepts, because they do thus and so, or are this and that. I have no more quarrel with these members than with a barometer. It registers the heaviness of the surrounding atmosphere and at times jumps with celerity from change to change; from its nature it can do no other. But man can change his nature at will, and I claim that if they would give their impartial attention to the principles of Law, (Karmic, cyclic or moral,) they would perceive that they state impossibilities. Let us put personality out of the question, for how are we to escape the bonds of individuality if we hug and expound it, and make it a basis for our actions and judgment of others? A given human quantity, call it X, undertakes to bring certain truths before the entire western world. The task is attended with difficulty, with labor, with opposition from all established orders: in the train of these things come ridicule, anger, opprobrium. Multiply these impediments a million fold. Which of us cares to face even the jeers of two continents? We need not add in such comparative trifles as expenditure of life-force, feeling, time, money, without return or reward, although these are paramount

considerations with the average man. X—the group so-called—has been moved to this herculean endeavor by humanitarian impulse, but you need not grant this much to the argument. Were all done from other motives the result would be the same, viz: the subsequent participants become one with the movers. The persons who accept any of the doctrine, eat of the fruit of X's labor and nourish their minds or lives with some part of X's vitality. "A life for a life," is written in this bond, and an inflexible chain is thus forged. Inversely X is obliged to share a part of the bad Karma of such society or persons as have been benefitted by their labor. It is under the operation of past good Karma that X has earned the right to aid humanity. Can a man drink of a stream and claim independence of its source? Can he live in a valley watered by it without pocketing the value of its diamonds when he sells his land or crops? The vast current of theosophy has rolled in upon us from the Orient, guided by a few courageous hands. The whole West feels its forceful flow in varied degrees, from theosophists who accept all, to M. D.s and LL. D.s who find themselves fortifying and widening their systems to compete with it. The etherial medium quivers with its energy; its thoughts rush in upon the minds of men in unexpected ways and places.

We live along the current like men who allow it to turn mill wheels, grind grain, water cattle and expedite commerce,—in a word—we get salvation, life force and many minor interests from it, and still have repudiation and impatience for the source. We do not go free; I thank God we do not. Karma attends! Karma, the great Law-giver, holds the scales. Each person who has received the teaching, or in whose life the leaven works, even unseen, insomuch as he accepts that life or that teaching, is rivetted to X by a tie as indissoluble as the justice of God—which is not that of man—can make it. Struggle as he will, X has fathered a part of him. We cannot separate any of the persons of this group; we do not escape the debt by any denial of it, but are like thieves taken with the plunder in our pockets: it must be paid now, by a recognition of it, or later under the scourges of that Power which saith,—"I will repay." That a man is unconscious of the debt matters nothing to the Law; he has taken, he must give; perhaps it was his duty to have known. Others vainly say,—"I did not ask that benefit." They did, or it could not have reached them: some part of them asked. The law of attraction is that of supply and demand; it regulates the universe in detail and in entirety.

It is not necessary to admire the persons grouped under the sign X. It *is* necessary not to condemn or lapidate them. If they have done less noble deeds in private capacities, be sure their full weight is borne by them alone, unless we rush in with our strictures, when we at once share them. If I fix my thought on the fault of another, an electric stream flows between that diseased moral part and myself, and draws elementals along it to torment me into a similar plague. Although in impartiality I make this appeal to your self interest, I am obliged to place my own loyalty above doubt by recording my faith in the noble integrity of Adepts and Founders. Faith is a boon that not every man is blessed with, but it is fraternal confidence in you all which leads me to hope that we may cease—as a society and as individuals—to bite the hands that supplied us. May we confine our thoughts to universals, our loves and hates to principles, not men. May we consider only that which stands within all facts and beings,—Spirit. In that holy name let us differ in peace and goodwill; let us stand staunchly by our own against the world! JULIUS.

One moment in eternity is of as great consequence as another moment, for eternity changes not, neither is one part better than another part.—*Zoroaster*.

OM.